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ABSTRACT

This information packet contains five papers related to personnel training in migrant early childhood education: (1) "Personnel Training-an Interstate Coordination Committee Report," by Mary E. Carr and Susan C. Morse, the longest of the papers, provides an overview of the best personnel practices and a discussion of training needs of migrant preschool education personnel; (2) "Together, We Can Do It!" lists vital practices for supporting and nurturing staff and families as identified by an Even Start staff; (3) "Building Bridges" describes a home-based program for migrant preschoolers and the training of its staff; (4) "Going Some Place? Career Ladders in Migrant Education," by Susan C. Morse, suggests ways to develop a career ladder for migrants in the field of education; and (5) "Cultural Fine Tuning: Tips for Home Visitors" (Susan C. Morse) offers suggestions for avoiding culture conflict when working with migrant families in their homes. The packet also lists resources for staff training. (KS)

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PERSONNEL TRAINING

BURNING ISSUES

for

Parents, Preschoolers, and Professionals

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MIGRANT EDUCATION
INTERSTATE COORDINATION

presented by

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PERSONNEL TRAINING

WORKING with YOUNG CHILDREN from MIGRANT FAMILIES

In this information packet you will find:

- Personnel Training
  - ICC Report
- We Can Do It Together
- Building Bridges
- Going Someplace
- Cultural Fine Tuning
- Resources

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°Fall 1992°

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County Superintendent of Schools

"Section 1203 (A) (i) of Chapter 1 of Title I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended."

(A Migrant Education Interstate/Intrastate Coordination Program)

A POSITION PAPER BY

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September 1992

Personnel Training

- an Interstate Coordination Committee Report

PURPOSE:

The intent of this position paper is to provide Chapter 1 Migrant Educator preschool advocates with an overview of the best personnel practices and a discussion of training needs of migrant preschool education personnel and how they might differ from other types of early childhood personnel training. It is also hoped that this document will help educators to promote inclusion of these needs in state and national efforts to raise the professional levels of the personnel in early childhood education.

BACKGROUND:

The National Preschool Coordination Project (NPCP) was created and funded by a U.S. Department of Education Migrant Education Interstate Coordination (1203) grant in 1990 to provide resources and support to states as they developed their Migrant Education preschool components. During the past two years, NPCP has brought together state personnel, direct service providers, early childhood specialists, and others concerned about quality services to migrant preschool children for discussion of key issues related to services to this population. To date, position papers on standards for early childhood education, retention, language issues, and developmentally and culturally appropriate practices have been developed by professionals affiliated with NPCP.

At the 1992 Migrant Education Conference, participants in a NPCP seminar discussed the current high level of interest across the nation in pairing the development of professional career ladders with state training plans. The meeting participants expressed enthusiastic support for such coordination. Training and professional development will lead to higher quality programs for all young children and their families. There was also agreement that it is important, at this time, to highlight special concerns related to personnel serving young migrant children, and that those concerns be shared with the state and national leaders who are addressing professional standards.

SERVICES:

Early childhood education services to young migrant children are provided by a wide range of professionals and paraprofessionals including Migrant Head Start teachers, Migrant Education staff, Even Start teachers, child care professionals, parent/infant educators, home/school consultants/ K-3 teaching staff, special education early childhood staff, aides, home liaisons and parents. These Child Care Professionals (C.C.P.s) require the same range of competencies as personnel of other early childhood systems, including knowledge of basic child development, family systems theory, verbal and written communication skills, assessment, and planning.

Unique to migrants are their compounded needs due to mobility, poverty, language differences and life style. The transiency of the families required to follow the agricultural seasons results in short duration of contact for services at each site. There is a critical need for fluid communication among service systems across the country to decrease fragmentation of services. Families in the migrant streams are from Hispanic, African American, Southeast Asian, East Indian, Native American, and European backgrounds. There are many children whose home language is not English. The variety of cultures of this population requires staff to be multicultural and competent in languages other than English, to be familiar with language acquisition issues of early childhood, and to have knowledge of cultural diversity and its implications in the planning and delivery of services to young children and their families.

Low pay in early childhood education impacts programs serving migrant children. Low pay limits recruitment capabilities and leads to staffing of programs by minimally trained persons.

Conversely, narrow job descriptions and hiring requirements in some areas have excluded people with appropriate language and cultural experience who can be provided with an effective training program.

Without appropriate training and career ladders, these people cannot develop the competence needed to offer quality programs.

DESIRED COMPETENCIES:

This committee holds strongly to the belief that all children need to establish basic concepts and competency in the language of their families. Staff should reflect the ethnic backgrounds of families served, and should be competent in the languages represented. We believe that these are baseline requirements for programs serving migrant families with young children. Beyond that, we recommend competencies in the following areas:

- Basic child development across physical, emotional, social language, and cognitive domains.

- Family systems theory and practice that are grounded in awareness of strategies for understanding, and methods for determining appropriate practices for working in partnership with families from diverse backgrounds.

- Methods of creating high quality age-appropriate environments for young children and their families.

- Methods of appropriate child assessment.

- The basics of adult education theory and practice to strengthen the critical component of parent education and support.

- Methods of verbal and written communication including listening skills, problem-solving, negotiation, reporting, and general team skills.

- Communication skills and basic systems theory for grounding in practices of collaboration, advocacy, resource networking, referral, and policy development.

- Theory and practice of bilingual education.

- Methods of education and inclusion for young children with special needs.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE PERSONNEL TRAINING

- Build on efforts to coordinate training begun within the Migrant Head Start Association.

- Encourage Migrant Head Start providers and Migrant Education state offices to contribute to the early childhood education training plan, including career ladders and salary schedule development efforts in each state to assure consistent inclusion of migrant staff issues.

- Advocate for comprehensive, multifaceted recruitment and training. This could be accomplished through a committee for early childhood education that seeks to attract, recruit and support persons of color and speakers of Spanish and other minority languages.

- Build steps into the system where employment classifications might allow entry level for "aide" without training (possibly mono-lingual in home language of children), mid-range training using a classification such as "instructor," and completion of required competencies meriting a classification of "teacher."

- Include competency acquisition options from preservice to a range of on-the-job training methods covering mentoring, workshops, classes for credit, and professional portfolio development.

- Utilize existing dollar resources through the regional, Indian, and Migrant Head Start systems in developing and providing comprehensive training attached to evolving state/national career ladders.

- Advocate expansion of Federal Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) funds to target early childhood education personnel.

- Encourage funding of scholarships and grants for Child Development Associate degree and two and four year college degrees in early childhood education through the Head Start resources and federal higher education bills.

SUMMARY:

This paper is meant to highlight the general issues related to programs serving migrant families with young children and to recommend the best practices for personnel of those programs. The Ad Hoc Committee on Training from the National Preschool Coordination Project urges that the values of developmentally appropriate practices, home language instruction, parent involvement, inclusion of migrant children in mainstream public school programs, and appropriate special education services to students with special needs drive the development of training requirements for staff serving migrant families with young children.

We further urge the inclusion of personnel from these programs in the development of career ladders with adequate salary schedules in each state plan.

And finally, we recommend training plans that include early outreach to middle and high school students and financial assistance in college for recruitment into the field for persons of color. Effective programs must include sensitive and competently trained staff who reflect the cultures and languages of the families served.

M/C 92
National Preschool Coordination Project

Together, We Can Do It!

Programs are people, and they fail without them. This Even Start program provides support for its staff and the families it serves. It fosters caring, nurturing and competence to the benefit of young children and their families.

With the belief that "educational empowerment of people is beneficial to society," Even Start staff identified the following:

Vital Practices for Promoting Change

1. Hire staff who are culturally and linguistically representative of program families. Staff must be flexible, knowledgeable of community resources, have personal ties to program families, and a strong desire to help.
2. Strengthen staff teaming and vision by establishing together a mission statement, program philosophy, and operating principles.
3. Staff training must be on-going, address program and staff needs, and include the topics of child development, family literacy, effective communication, intercultural skills, and family systems.
4. Develop a non-hierarchical staff structure where each staff member knows their job is vital to program success. Implement staff program suggestions. Give staff leadership roles.
5. Prevent staff burnout. Don't expect or allow staff to take on responsibilities that cannot be reasonably accomplished within their employed hours. Build into staff hours time for emotional processing. Staff needs to be angry, cry, laugh, and celebrate together. Encourage staff to care for, mentor, confront, and support each other.
6. Community outreach and trust building activities must be on-going. Staff must do regular home visits with each family. Program information must be written in the language and literacy level of the adults. Sponsor community events - i.e., picnics, garage sales, talent shows - where staff and families can socialize together.
7. Programming must be flexible, continually evaluated and adapted to the uniqueness of each family. Match program needs with the strengths of available resources. The starting point is where the families and staff are currently functioning.
8. A family's basic needs for food, shelter, safety, and health care must be met before educational instruction can begin.
9. Use the *teachable moment*. When families need assistance in filling out a form, turn it into a literacy lesson.

10. Build family and staff self-esteem through encouragement, focussing on their strengths and celebrating their successes. Assist staff and families in understanding that their success is due to their own efforts and decisions.

11. Work through the tough stuff together. Do not allow prejudice, bureaucratic dysfunction, destructive gossip, and personal losses to interfere with movement toward the vision of educational empowerment of all people. Staff needs to remind each other continually to stay out of the *Drama triangle*, which means to refuse to play the role of rescuer, victim, or persecutor.

12. Maintain a sense of humor. Look for the positive. Stay calm during conflict. Remember that breaking old patterns takes time and practice.

This unique partnership to assist these families in a family learning center was formed by the Poudre R-1 School District and Colorado State University.

From "Together, We Can Do It!", National Center for Family Literacy; Volume 4, Issue 2; July, 1992.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Building Bridges is one of the few complete programs developed by Migrant Education for preschoolers. This home-based program has a strong staff training component and includes a training manual.

Building Bridges is a home-based early childhood education program designed for migrant three year olds. The model is based on the developmental curriculum of Maria Montessori and adapted for migrant families. Cecelia Gutierrez and Diana Chapa as well as Migrant Program Director, LeRoy Jackson were instrumental in designing the program. There are two binders of curriculum (Spanish and English), tapes of songs and games, and a training manual. Several important aspects make the program unique:

1. Spanish material is not a translation of English, but comparable original material.
2. Materials used in the home are always provided, but are inexpensive and commonly found in most homes.
3. Monthly parent meetings supplement the home visits and provide training as well as peer support for parents.
4. Staff receive on-going training and attend regular support meetings.
5. Activities are interesting for children, but not difficult or frustrating. The priority is that children are successful, and the parent perceives their child to be capable and successful.

Because Texas provides a statewide educational program for four year olds qualifying for Chapter 1 services, Building Bridges provides supplemental educational services to three year olds. The program has been used successfully elsewhere with four year olds and entering kindergartners. Building Bridges staff is willing to provide training to those interested in implementing the program.

- Contact Cecilia Gutierrez, Region One Service Center Edinburg Texas, (512) 383-5611.

TRAINING: Specific training is provided for each group: supervisors or home educator trainers, the home educators who will implement the program, and the parents who are participating in the program. Each training program differs in the length of training and the frequency of follow-up activities. It is suggested that training for supervisors or parent educators should not be less than twenty hours. A suggested trainer's schedule is provided. Parent training is discussed in the section *Home Educator's Manual*. The training for parents should be held at a minimum of one monthly meeting to be scheduled at convenient times for the community and parents involved.

GOING SOME PLACE?

Career Ladders in Migrant Education

Many of us are bemoaning the lack of qualified staff while a valuable human resource, migrant staff, families and students remain untapped for service in Migrant Education.

If Migrant Education had begun a career ladder at the onset of the program in 1966, staff would more closely reflect the population served, and there would be many well-trained former migrants in education nationwide.

The reality is that few migrant aides, parents or students have come up through the ranks, beginning work as paraprofessionals, increasing skills and education while working, and moving up the job ladder, ultimately to become professional teachers and administrators in the program.

Presently on that job ladder, there are too many rungs missing. The six year educational gap between aide and teacher has prevented many qualified staff from moving up professionally in Migrant Education.

It benefits the organization to foster the education of its staff, and Migrant Education could tap the rich resource of the migrant community by developing a career ladder. Non-English speaking staff can be trained to recruit and serve as liaisons; a good career ladder can provide training to develop bilingual aides who can advocate in the community and serve children. All rungs can provide college credit valid toward a teaching credential.

Courses can help develop advocacy skills so these paraprofessionals can support and enhance the educational development of children. Advocates (a new job concept in many states) can continue their schooling to become credentialed within or outside the program. Ultimately, leaders among these teachers could be trained for administrative positions.

Early childhood education services provide us with the opportunity to design new job descriptions that provide incremental increases in skills, education and compensation. If we act now, we can coordinate with national efforts and local programs to design programs the encourage professional growth and make it feasible for the migrant population to climb the career ladder.

by Susan C. Morse
- from *Visions*; Volume II; Issue 1

Cultural Fine Tuning
Tips for Home Visitors

Each time two people meet, two cultures touch and sometimes clash. Clashes can take place even when visitors are of the same language and culture as the family. Home visitors should be acutely aware that each family has a distinct culture of its own.

When educators make home visits, they are stepping into the world and culture of the family they visit, often without invitation or warning. As a home visitor, we are the outsiders. We must do everything we can to reduce culture clash.

In a discussion with school principal (and former migrant educator) **Alicia Valdez,** of San Luis, Arizona, we identified several areas in which cultural sensitivity is important for all home visitors .

Whether we are Hispanic, Anglo or 'other,' we all operate on more than one "station". We need to consciously tune in to the appropriate station when we make home visits. We may have different roles, rules, behaviors for our family, our jobs, or our friends. Our stations may be tuned differently for each role.

Dress: A young chicana aide planned to make a home visit to a new migrant family. In the hot summer, she was accustomed to wearing cut off shorts and a tank top. The family was a traditional Oaxacan family, where women wore long skirts and blouses. There were many other difference between these two cultures.

Advice: Always be formal (polite), conservative and traditional. It is easier to "loosen up" than to "straighten up" if the situation calls for it.

Arrival: Tune in before you arrive at the home. Begin to anticipate what you may encounter. Keep your antennae out for signals that will help you adapt. Notice the neighborhood and homes so that you can make helpful comments or compliments. (i.e., "I noticed that the clinic is only a mile down the road and you have a library at the corner - What a good location!"

Tu/Ud.: Do not use "tu" until you have been told to by the family. We may not like "usted" because it delineates class differences and implies submission on the part of the person using it. "Tu", among young people is considered assertive. But "Usted" expresses respect on the traditional "station".

Affirming the Family: You will hear "Yo no puedo hacer nada." If the parents are expressing a feeling of loss of control, you need to counteract

that and respond "Al contrario, esta haciendo mucho ahorita." "What you are doing right now is very important, you are raising your child, feeding, clothing, and sending him to school so that we can do our job effectively. You are teaching the child what you know. You are doing something very important and you are doing a tremendous job at it."

Join the Circle: In the hispanic culture, conversations go in circles, or actually in spirals, gradually leading to the point. Often there is a fable or moral to the story. Think of AEsop. You need his patience to find your way into the circle in order to get your point across rather than charging across it. Go with the flow.

Confidante: The home visit provides a little time for sharing and sometimes for confidences for migrant parents. You will need to be a caring listener, and to assure them of your confidentiality. Leave them with the feeling that they have strengths and can solve problems.

Messenger: You will need the ability to take criticism from people. Parents are often frustrated and angry at the system. To them, you are the messenger and appear to have control that they feel they lack. The best defense is no defense. "Lo siento mucho." Offer a resource if you have one. "Aqui hay un numero de telefono.."

Personal Attitude: We all should have the capacity to make mistakes. Its OK. Learn from it. Have the ability to laugh at yourself, it relieves tension. Enjoy yourself and the fine people you are visiting.

Points to Remember:

1- Respect the dignity of the person and trust the individual
2- Show care and concern for people
3- Be ready to share something about yourself that shows that you are trusting and trustworthy
4- After greetings and chatting, express the purpose of the visit
5- Be a good listener. Know when to change from casual conversation to the point of your visit. (Tune your station when necessary)
6- Always be willing to give information (refer to others, if you do not know yourself) . Teach them how to access information themselves.
7- Share truthful information about what can and cannot be done. Don't over-promise, or withhold information.

-by Susan Morse, based on an interview with Alicia Valdez

Resources

CDA Degree

Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program
Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition

Vilma Williams
CDA Rep Support Specialist

1718 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20009
(202) 265-9090
(800) 424-4310

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American Society for Training and Development

ASTD San Diego Chapter, P.O. Box 80756, San Diego, CA 92138
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